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## *Senate* EDUCATION

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, as we gather today in this Chamber, it is quiet. We have people here prepared to take down our words, but relatively few words are being said. We are on the threshold of a historic occasion here in the Senate, where the leadership, at least the majority, is about to pass from our Republican friends to the Democrats' side of the aisle.

While there are many issues about which there might be partisan disagreements, there are many issues on which there is bipartisan agreement. One of those is the education of our children.

Today, visiting our Nation's Capitol, coming to this Chamber and that on the other end of the building in the House of Representatives, are the young and the old. In those groups of visitors to their Nation's Capitol are many schoolchildren. In many cases they are with parents and with teachers. They have come here to experience our Capitol, to experience the longest living democracy in the history of the world, the United States of America.

This Chamber was not silent just for a good part of this day but for much of last week as well, as we were in recess in observance of Memorial Day. In Delaware and in States across the country, on Memorial Day and during last week, we remembered and saluted and thanked our veterans who served in our Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, who in many cases sacrificed their lives in wars of the past century, and the two before that.

There is a document we are all proud of in this country called the Constitution. The Constitution of our Nation is the longest living written constitution of any nation on Earth. It was adopted on September 17, 1787, first by the little State of Delaware. As I like to kid my colleagues, Delaware for one whole week was the entire United States of America. Then we opened it up, and other States came in: Pennsylvania and New Jersey and Maryland and the rest joined us. Eventually there were 50 of us, and it has turned out well.

Mr. President, 213 years later we are going strong. Every now and then our democracy is put to the test. That democracy will be put to the test in this Chamber as we prepare for the passing of the torch from the current majority, Republicans, to the next majority, the Democrats.

One issue we will address later this afternoon, to take up again, is one we have been addressing for the better part of a month, and that is redefining the role of the Federal Government in the education of our children. While we have some disagreements in the margins, there is much about which we agree.

I say to all who come here today and in the days ahead to observe this debate, whether you happen to be from schools in Claymont, DE, or schools in Colorado or any other place, that we will endeavor to do our best to make sure the young people--very young people and those not quite so young--will have every opportunity to be

successful in their schools and in their later endeavors, so when they walk across the stage and get that diploma and leave high school, it means they are ready to go on to be successful in college, careers, military, the private sector, public service sector--whatever they do--to be successful for their employers and, just as importantly, for themselves.

There is a meeting commencing this afternoon, after the Democrat and Republican caucuses. A number of Democrat and a number of Republican Senators were invited to the White House, presumably to meet with the President and members of his administration to discuss education reform.

While the numbers have shifted here a bit

in the Senate, what should not have shifted is our commitment to our young people and making sure the Federal Government plays a more appropriate role in the years ahead. As we infuse more resources into our public schools, as we provide greater resources to the public schools, we seek to hold those schools accountable for results, rewarding the kind of performance we want to see and, where it is not happening, to make sure we take steps and the schools take steps to get the kind of performance they want and need and we desire as well.

Finally, we must make sure, better than we did before, that we empower parents to make decisions, real decisions, meaningful decisions, about the education of their children in the public schools of America.